

**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

**FEBRUARY 2002 MEETINGS**

February 4, 2002

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Dennis M. Sullivan called a Regular Meeting of the School Committee to order in the aldermanic chambers at 8:00 p.m., with a moment of silence and a salute to the flag of the United States of America.

**II. ROLL CALL**

Present were Ms. Cardoso, Ms. Murray, Mayor Gay, Ms. Bauer, Ms. Harris, Ms. Taylor, Alderman White, Ms. Rossetti, and Chairman Sullivan.

No one was absent.

**III. AWARDS AND CITATIONS**

Mayor Dorothy Kelly Gay presented a Citation to Somerville's Peggy Melanson, a columnist, independent journalist, performing artist, storyteller and workshop presenter who represented Somerville as an Olympic Torchbearer for the 2002 Winter Olympics Torch Relay on December 27<sup>th</sup>.

**IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

There were no minutes submitted for this evening's meeting.

**V. STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL**

Student representative for the 2001-2002 school year, Kerri Connolly, was absent this evening and no report was given.

**VI. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT**

Dr. Argenziano reported on the following items:

1. Advised that the SHS 150<sup>th</sup> Celebration Committee will meet on Thursday, February 7<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m., in the Ray Izzo Highlander Café.
2. On Saturday, February 9<sup>th</sup>, the school committee will meet at Tufts University from 8:30 a.m., to 1:00 p.m.
3. Reported that relative to diversity, a listing of teachers hired since 1996 to 2002 was prepared by the Human Resources Manager, Anthony C. Caliri and was submitted to members.

**VI. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT (cont.)**

Dr. Argenziano reported on the following items (cont.)

4. Spoke regarding the MCAS Appeals Process unanimously approved by the Board of Education after a two-month period of public comment. Dr. Argenziano gave a brief explanation of the appeals process for the committee. Lengthy discussion followed among members.
5. Congratulated both the West Somerville Neighborhood School and the Winter Hill Community School, principals, staff and students on their continuing improvements in student performance demonstrated by their 2001 MCAS scores in English Arts and Mathematics and for being invited to apply to be a 2002 Commonwealth Compass School by the Department of Education.
6. A one-page memorandum from Mr. Joseph Burke, Social Studies Department Head, entitled *Objections to the History and Social Science Frameworks Draft* was submitted to members. Ms. Rossetti requested that a letter be sent to Professor Paul Gagnon advising him that the Social Studies Department has accepted the draft as it relates to the MCAS Social Studies test.
7. Submitted a very interesting article in Education Week entitled *Boys to Men* relative to some researchers question how attuned schools are to boys' learning needs.
8. Also, an article from *Parents Forum* based on thoughtful examination of eight original questions about family life issues was also submitted to members. The committee decided to purchase about five copies of this book.
9. A memo from Mr. Gerald Knight, Coordinator of Athletics and Intramural Sports/Physical Education at SHS to Mr. Robert A. Snow, Assistant Superintendent for C/I/A relative to a request from Ms. Taylor at an Ed. Programs and Instruction Subcommittee meeting on Wednesday, January 23<sup>rd</sup> was submitted. The memo requested an informal survey regarding feasibility of opening the gym in the morning before school for student use and an informal survey implementing dance groups after school. Dr. Argenziano reported that Mr. Knight is working on this information. Ms. Cardoso also requested these students be surveyed formally to see if there were any other areas of interest they might have.
10. A copy of a letter from two Choice Program parents was also submitted to members.
11. School Council Minutes from Somerville High School and the Edgerly Education Center were submitted.
12. The February Calendar of Events was also provided.

**VII. REPORT OF SUBCOMMITTEES**

A. ***Long Range Planning Committee of the Whole:*** Chairman Sullivan (Jan. 31)

Subject to be discussed - Future School Space Issues

Chairman Sullivan announced that due to inclement weather this meeting was postponed to Monday, February 11, 2002, at the East Somerville Community School beginning at 7 p.m.

B. ***Finance and Facilities Subcommittee:*** Ms. Rossetti (Feb. 4)

Subjects discussed:

1. Approval of Billrolls
2. Mid-Year Financial Report – Ms. Marie B. Ferrari, Assist. Supt. for Finance
3. Work Order Update – Mr. R. Ciampi
4. Building Utilization Request

Approved motions:

1. To approve the billrolls as submitted
2. To approve the use of the SHS Auditorium on April 17, 2002, with all fees waived, by the Somerville Public Library.
3. To accept the \$7,000 Verizon grant to support the Lincoln Park Community School

MASC Division II Meeting:

Ms. Rossetti advised that she, Ms. Taylor, Ms. Bauer and Ms. Ferrari attended the MASC Division II meeting relative to the FY03 budget process on January 30, 2002, at the Rodney J. Hardy Elementary School in Arlington. Seven other communities were also present and shared their budget process. Four representatives from the state were also present and they conducted dialogue relative to the tax revenue collections graph presented advising how desperate the state is financially since September 11<sup>th</sup>. Their prediction is that there could be a \$2 billion dollar shortfall next year.

MOTION: Ms. Rossetti made a motion, seconded by Ms. Bauer, to send a communication to Governor Jane Swift, Senator Charles E. Shannon, Jr., Senator Thomas F. Birmingham, Representatives Vincent P. Ciampa, Timothy J. Toomey, Jr., and Patricia D. Jehlen and the Mass. Municipal Association, seeking their support of our efforts to ensure continued appropriate funding of education by supporting the move to postpone the income tax rollback. A carbon copy to be sent to the PTA Councils, Title I PAC, SPED PAC, Bilingual PAC, School Councils, Board of Aldermen and MASC Division II communities. The motion was approved by voice vote.

**VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

There was no unfinished business reported this evening.

**IX. NEW BUSINESS**

**A. Prevention Task Force**

Ms. Murray gave a brief update on behind-the-scenes happenings relative to the Prevention Task Force. The Steering Committee is being coordinated with Alice Comack and there are two slots available for school committee members. Ms. Murray asked her colleagues if they are interested to please contact her. A special meeting will take place on Wednesday, February 13, 2002, at the SHS auditorium from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., for the general public. A Steering Committee meeting will take place just before this meeting at 6 p.m., to meet with the reps in the Principal's conference room at SHS.

**B. Field Trip – Approved by voice vote.**

**February 7, 2002:** Vocational Shop at SHS, four teachers, to New England Institute of Technology, Rhode Island. Transportation by bus at a no cost to students.

**X. ITEMS FROM BOARD MEMBERS**

**Ms. Rossetti**

1. Congratulated the Boys' Indoor Track Team for achieving the title, 2002 GBL Champs (actually co-champs with Cambridge). Ms. Rossetti wished them good luck in the upcoming GBL meet. She invited the entire team and coaching staff to the March 4<sup>th</sup> school committee meeting to receive a Citation as well as announcing the numerous records, which have been broken this season.

Ms. Rossetti also congratulated Wainwright Wint on his acceptance to Harvard University!

2. The next Family Night at the West Somerville Neighborhood School will take place on Friday, February 8<sup>th</sup> beginning at 6:30 p.m. There will be a storyteller, Brother Blue, for the younger children and their families. A dance will again be held in the gym for grades 6-8 on the same evening.
3. Ms. Rossetti congratulated Ms. Pearl Morrison, Principal of the WSNS and Ms. Maureen Hilliard, Principal of the WHCS and their staffs for being invited to apply to become a 2002 Commonwealth Compass School as a result of their school's performance as it relates to MCAS scores for 2001. They are being asked to help provide direction to other schools throughout the state.
4. Advised that there will be a new program beginning February 11<sup>th</sup> at the PHCS entitled Math Exchange, Stop to Shop (K-3). This program will help children to learn how to apply Math skills to a variety of activities. There will be incentives for the classroom teachers and parents are asked to please encourage their children to participate in this fun-filled program. Ms. Rossetti said the end result should include an increase in the MCAS scores.

**X. ITEMS FROM BOARD MEMBERS (cont.)**

**Aldermanic President White**

Advised that a number of school committee members raised their concerns regarding a Resolution adopted by the Board of Aldermen at the last meeting and he spoke with the authors of the Resolution and advised that it was not their intent to duplicate the efforts of the school department regarding the Prevention Task Force. He advised that this issue would remain in the BOA committee, which would, therefore, allow members of the BOA to be updated by the two school committee members who will be on the Steering Committee.

Ms. Murray advised that Alderman, at Large Bruce M. Desmond, and another Alderman to be decided would be the liaisons to the school committee.

**Ms. Taylor**

1. Commended Kathleen McCarthy, Kindergarten Teacher at the PHCS, for being featured in the Boston Globe outlining how she handles cheating in the Kindergarten classroom.
2. Advised of a joint program of the Somerville Arts Council and the Mystic Learning Center. *Books of Hope* seeks to create opportunities for self-expression and advocacy through creative writing, so that young people can reach out to each other, to their neighbors, and to others around the world. *Books of Hope* is funded in part by a YouthReach grant from the Mass. Cultural Council. The next Book Party will be on Friday, February 8<sup>th</sup> at the Mystic Activity Center from 6 to 9 p.m.

**Mayor Gay**

On behalf of the new Green Space Coordinator, Ann Felts, the Mayor announced there would be a meeting on Tuesday, February 12<sup>th</sup> along with members of the Conservation Commission, the Housing Authority and the Office of Community Development at the Assisted Living Facility on Lowell Street to talk about an agenda for the Open Space provision process. A committee will be formed to work on the 2002 Open Space plans for Somerville. Mayor Gay said she hoped a member from the school committee would come to this meeting.

**Ms. Murray**

1. Mentioned that she and her family attended the Cummings School *Astronomer in the Classroom* program a few weeks ago and her son won a CD player donated by the store manager, Chad DuFour, of Osco on Somerville Avenue. Ms. Murray requested that a letter be sent thanking Mr. DuFour for the contribution and to also to invite him to become an Adopt-A-School/Business Partner.
2. Also mentioned that she has been in contact with the Boston Globe, City Section, and they are interested in stories regarding the school department and asked members that if they had anything to please let her know and she would pass them along.

**X. ITEMS FROM BOARD MEMBERS (cont.)**

**Ms. Cardoso**

1. Reported that the Lincoln Park Community School will conduct their PTA conferences (no meeting) on Tuesday, February 12<sup>th</sup> beginning at 2:45 p.m. to 4:45 p.m.
2. Mentioned that the Bilingual Education Symposium is next Wednesday, February 13<sup>th</sup>, from 4 to 6 p.m., prior to the Prevention Task Force meeting at SHS at 6:30 p.m.
3. The Lincoln Park Community School PTA will be sponsoring a Valentines Dance for Grades 6-8 on Friday, February 15<sup>th</sup>.

**XI. COMMUNICATIONS**

Chairman Sullivan congratulated the New England Patriots on their tremendous game on Sunday!

**XII. PERSONNEL**

School Committee members were notified and accepted the following personnel actions of February 4, 2002 as follows:

**A. Retirement**

Ms. Patricia Lynch, Head Clerk, effective February 1, 2002, after 34 years of service to the Somerville Public Schools.

Mayor Dorothy Kelly Gay requested that a Citation be presented to Mrs. Lynch at the February 25<sup>th</sup> school committee.

**B. Resignations**

1. Ms. Deborah Tsaikos Grams, Paraprofessional @ SPED, effective February 1, 2002.
2. Ms. Patricia Brown, Paraprofessional @ SPED, effective January 4, 2002.

**C. Maternity Leaves of Absence**

1. Ms. Jocelyn Hernandez, Paraprofessional @ ESCS, effective February 1, 2002.
2. Ms. Julie Agresti Jones, K Teacher @ Healey, beginning April 12, 2002.
3. Ms. Ann Myers, Counselor Educator @ Cummings & Edgerly Schools, beginning February 15, 2002.

**D. Personal Leave of Absence**

Ms. Kelly Demers, Gr. 6 Teacher @ ESCS, for the 202-2003 school year.

**Monday, February 4, 2002 – Regular Meeting**

**XII. PERSONNEL(cont.)**

**E. Authorizations**

**Food Services**

Assistant Supervisor  
Effective 1/14/02  
New Position

Mary Joan McLarney  
23 Kirkland Drive  
Andover, MA 01810  
Salary: \$54,000

**School Linked Services**

Childcare Assistant  
Eff: 1/17/02

Stephanie Rivera  
29 Grant St.  
Somerville, MA 02144  
Salary: \$10.71/hr.

Family Liaison  
Eff: 1/15/02

Anne Stackpole  
30 Paulina St.  
Somerville, MA 02144  
Salary: \$16.60/hr.

**Civil Service Bids**

Healey School- 2<sup>nd</sup> shift  
Junior Building Custodian  
Eff: 2/4/02  
Vice: Anderson (transfer)

Robin LaGee  
493 Broadway  
Somerville, MA 02145

Kennedy School  
Senior Building Custodian  
Effective 2/4/02  
Vice: Connolly (transfer)

Russell Campbell  
8 Cady St.  
Billerica, MA 01821

**XIII. DEATHS**

The superintendent reported with regret the recent deaths of the following persons. A moment of silence was observed and letters of sympathy will be sent to their families.

- Mrs. Maria "Mary" Colozzo, (Jan. 29), mother of Robert Colozzo, teacher at Somerville High School and
- Mrs. Mary Donahue, (Feb. 2), mother of Patti Marques, secretary at central administration

Mrs. Cardoso also requested prayers for Ward 7 school committee member, Mary Jo Rossetti's father, who is ill.

**XIV. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m., by voice vote.

Dr. Albert F. Argenziano  
Secretary